7: Thompson--363 [3] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"One able Thai, Phya Ngam, succeeded in carving a kingdom for himself out of the Laotian principalities, whose capital he established at Luang-Prabang. This remained the capital until the middle of the sixteenth century when it was abandoned for Vientiane. The Thai invasions finally succeeded in dispersing the Khas into small isolated groups.

Phya Ngam was related by marriage to the Khmer kings, and his reign marked the beginning of close relations between Cambodia and Laos. At Ngam's request Buddhist missionaries were sent to the kingdom and with them came Khmer workmen and scholars. The eastward expansion of this bellicose monarch brought him into contact with the Emperor of Annam, who made a boundary treaty with him, as did the King of Siam on the Western frontier. The peaceful period that followed was duly interrupted in 1478 by an invasion from Annam, now freed from Cham warfare. This war-like interlude was a strange lapse on the part of the gentle and amiable Laotians, whose pacific nature soon re-asserted itself by re-knitting friendly relations with their Eastern neighbours. The only shadow cast over this period was the slight religious intolerance of a pious Buddhist monarch who tried unsuccessfully to forbid the cult of Brahmanism in his domain."

7: Thompson--363-364 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"The rise of Vientiane in the sixteenth century was due to its greater [364] proximity to Cambodia and Siam, and to its commercial prosperity. Cordial relations were maintained by the Prince of Vientiane with the now decadent Khmers, and with the King of Siam against Luang-Prabang and Burma. This alliance provoked three successive invasions on the part of the Burmese, who, though invariably victorious, were defeated by the country itself and forced eventually by famine and sickness to withdraw. The seventeenth century brought a period of needed peace both foreign and domestic. European travellers of the time have left accounts of the brilliance of contemporary Vientiane. The best narrative is by a Dutchman, Van Wusthoff, in 1641, who came to establish trade relations between Vientiane and Batavia, and it is corroborated by the accounts of two Jesuits, Martini and Marini."

7: Thompson--364 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 648

"Early in the eighteenth century a series of civil wars over succession to the throne brought this peaceful period to a bloody close. Annamite support of one candidate provoked a fatal rift between Vientiane and Luang-Prabang. These now mutually jealous principalities called in foreign support, to the inevitable annihilation of Laotian independence. Vientiane was totally eclipsed as a result and Luang-Prabang fell under the double tutelage of Annam and Siam."

T: Thompson--366-367 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians-1-2
116, 175, 648

"France's 1883 treaty with Hué, and her pre-occupation with Tonkin, did not escape the notice of Siam. Backed by England, who saw in Laos a safe outlet for Siamese ambitions, Bangkok redoubled its efforts to get control of the lands belonging to the senile and insouciant king of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese expedition was prepared with such secrecy that De Kergaradec, the French envoy at Bangkok, only knew of it after the troops' departure. The Court of Hué, though feeling none too cordially towards the French, was not slow in pointing out this breach in Annam's sovereign rights in Laos, for which France was now [367] responsible. A protest to Bangkok was necessarily vague because of the ill-defined rights of both Siam and Annam in the North, but it eventuated in the signing of a seven-years agreement between Siam and France on May 7, 1886. France profited by this arrangement to the extent of having a consul at Luang-Prabang and certain extra-territorial rights in Siam. The ratification of this treaty for the first time raised definitely the problem of Annamite-Siamese-Laotian frontiers. Pavie was dispatched again to gather the information necessary to drawing boundary lines in Upper Laos. He returned not only with the technical knowledge required, but with the conviction that the oppressed people of Luang-Prabang would relish a French Protectorate as a defence against Siamese encroachments and Hos invasions. His efforts led to the conclusion of an agreement on March 27, 1889, by which the Siamese were to stop the eastward march of their troops, evacuate the region of Cammon, where however, a Siamese khaluong had a right to provisional residence, and the French to a

military post at Napé.

As time went on the French claimed that the Siamese had fulfilled none of these conditions and were pushing steadily ahead in Laos. In proportion as these grievances piled up, the Metropolitan government was unwilling to take any action against Siam, especially as Tonkin was giving them quite enough trouble as it was. The English were simultaneously expanding in Upper Burma and in the Shan States, and getting ever nearer to Upper Laos."

10: d'Orleans--292-294 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-4
116. 648, 721, 177.72 France
636.72

"Without seeking to undertake an historical work, which would carry us too far, we have only to glance over some of the old maps to find the justification for that phrase of Garnier's which should have been the groundwork of our policy in this region. 'What we had to do was to make the king of Luang Prabang feel that a day might come when we should take up the rights exercised over his principality by the Court of Hué, which has now become once more our vassal. Unfortunately, the Siamese, whose influence had extended, after 1838 (2) towards Luang Prabang, came and [293] established

2. According to Hallett (A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, p. 201), the Shan States of Vienchang and of Luang Prabang became tributary to Siam. The Siamese authority in the Shan States consisted in arranging their external affairs and sanctioning the nomination of their chiefs. In return for the protection of Siam against the foreign invaders, three States consented to send a triennial tribute, consisting of gold and silver boxes, chased cellarettes and salt-cellars, as well as gold and silver trees worth from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each. To these statements of Hallett as to the early date at which Luang Prabang bebecame tributary to Siam, I would rejoin that the chronicles of Luang Prabang, which have been consulted by M. Pavie, do not contain any

allusions to Siam at an earlier period than the last half-century. The Laï chronicle, to which I referred above when dealing with Deo Van Tri, only alluded to the state of dependency in which the King of Luang Prabang stood with regard to Annam.

M. Deschanel would seem to have anticipated the views suggested, if not openly expressed by Hallett,, Colquhoun and Lord Lamington, when he wrote in 1885: 'The day that England seizes Burmah, our authority in the eastern part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula will receive a severe shock. If we do not take our precautions (in the Upper Laos) the English, once established at Xieng Maï (in Siamese Laos) will be masters, morally speaking, of the valley of the Mekong and the important position of Luang Prabang, which was tributary to Annam. Thus cut off from the great river, in danger of seeing England secure the protectorate of Siam, our situation in Indo-China will be very much weakened.'--Compare Garnier above,

themselves there for good a few years ago, when they learnt that the French were approaching from the direction of Tonquin. I have already related, when speaking of Deo Van Tri, the ambush set for his brothers, the Siamese officers being accompanied by an Englishman, one McCarthy, who, with another of his compatriots, had been appointed agent at Luang Prabang. I have also referred to the meeting of French and Siamese troops in the plain of Theng, and the retreat of the latter. We were not able to push on any further, for the aged king of Luang Prabang, who [294] had at one time hoped to be backed up by our arms, foresaw the policy of non-intervention and excessive prudence which would be impressed upon our officers. He recognised that the valiant champions of our colonial extension would have their hands tied and that it would be no use reckoning upon us. 'The Siamese are coming up,' he said to Dr. Neis; 'we are lost.'

As a matter of fact, while we were standing still, the Siamese were advancing, and it is easy to understand the political course followed by the Court of Bangkok; as long as it is left free, it is always marching forward, occupying advance posts, sometimes with only seven or eight militia men, but still making a reality of its occupation. But for Colonel Pennequin, Theng would have fared no better than all the important centres upon the Mekong as far as Cambodia and than several towns between the coast and the river; one can feel that these Siamese troops, when they are on the march, have behind them

the moral if not the effective support of intelligent and fearless persons, who are used to getting their way by firm speaking, the only obstacles which they are likely to encounter from European nations being idle diplomatic protests."

10: d'Orleans--294-295 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 648, 727

"As soon as they have established themselves anywhere, the Siamese at once endeavour to combat rival influences, winning over allies underhand and terrorizing those who, seeing no other chance of succour, are compelled to accept their friendship. In 1872 they entered upon the district of Traninh and depopulated part of it, while from Luang Prabang they sent agents on to our territory in the region of [295] Son La. They also took natives who were under our protection from Song Ma and made them march thirty days to drink in secret 'the water of the oath' at a pagoda outside the town, and they are now eager to seize the rich table-lands of the Ponôn. Thus in 1891 ten Annamite chiefs who had been sent into this region by the French Resident at Vinh, with interpreters in our service, were, against the faith of treaties, arrested and sent to Bangkok by order of the Siamese colonel commanding at Luang Prabang, the interpreters beaten, and our flag torn to rags. Only a few days ago an officer put up a proclamation in the town threatening with death all friends of the French, and, in order to obtain reparation for this insult M. Massie was obliged to make a personal business of it and talk of calling the colonel out. So much for the influence possessed by our agents!

The young chiefs, powerless to maintain their autonomy, prefer making a complete surrender to their new masters; and I recently learned that the king had sent for Thais from Theng, that is to say our subjects, who had been transported to the confines of Luang Prabang, and had promised to pay them for cultivating the soil, if they would

undertake not to quit his kingdom; because Siam may succeed in extending its power and spoliating its neighbours, we must not conclude that it is in good odour with its neighbours--very much the contrary."

23: Franck--303 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 175, 648, 177.64 France
636.64

"The same altruism and love of their fellow-man that has given the French the arduous task of protecting the rest of Indo-China led to their present position in the affairs of Laos. About the time the Chinese from Yünnan were pillaging Luang Prabang kingdom a Frenchman named Pavie was sent there on a mission. The father of the present king, born Tiao Kham Souk, who lived from 1837 until 1904 and reigned under the name of Ritthithamaronjsac--though he was more popularly known as King Zacharine, and probably not entirely on account of his sweet disposition--was an absolute despot, descended from a long direct line of similar rulers. For the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha has been a kingdom as far back as the memory of its people goes. Zacharine became a great friend of Pavie, at least according to such data as was available in the French government offices of Luang Prabang, and when the Siamese failed to protect him, as they had promised, against the Chinese, he went to Siam under Pavie's wing; and later, in a quarrel with the Siamese, who had burned and looted and carried off most of the people of Vientiane and Xieng Khuang, he made the mistake, like his royal neighbors of Annam and Cambodia, of calling in the French. By 1893 Siam had been compelled to give up all claim to this ancient kingdom and to the magnificent highlands of Tran-ninh, and all Laos became a European dependency under the protection of France."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

115: Le Boulanger

● 648

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

[For the history of the foreign relations of the various Laotian states, amongst themselves, with other Southeast Asian states, other Indochinese states, and the French, see category 116, throughout.]

"But in regard to the kingdom's laws, it is a certain fact that 671
there are very few of them, because, in my opinion, there is no 571
great need of any in order to live in accordance with the customs 626
of the land. The people are brought up to work, to have very little
to do with foreigners, not to undertake anything which might dis-
turb them and to live an idle and /115/ listless life although not
lacking any of the things necessary to preserve it. The king's will,
which does not greatly interfere with his people, takes the place
of a great many laws for them.... The manner in which the in-
habitants of the land live with one another is highly civil and
obliging. Unfriendliness and quarrels are banished... they all have
enough to live on and get along on, so that one does not hear of
thieves except as a thing quite out of the ordinary.... But the /565/
mandarins do not behave in the same way. Indeed, their insolence
and their insulting and criminal conduct dim the praise which the
common people merit on this account, because they abuse the
power which they have in the kingdom, and when they see some-
thing which pleases them... they act in such wise as to find means
for taking possession of it.

"But if we should now pass to the person of the king in order to 643*
describe him, there is no monarch, no matter how powerful, whom 174
he does not regard as beneath him, and it would indeed seem that 648
he affects not to yield in any particular to the emperors of China...
Only rarely does he appear in public... preferring to be worshiped
by his people as a hidden God rather than as a man like themselves
and of the same nature... He allows himself to be seen only twice
/116/ a year, for a period of three days, by his people, who re-
ceive this grace from their prince with such gratitude and joyous
sentiments that he forgets nothing on these occasions which might
contribute to their amusement. For this purpose there are several /527/
elephants which are trained to do a thousand little tricks and several wild
animals which are kept chained and made to fight... finally there
are wrestlers and gladiators and others, with their skirmishes which
last until last until evening and terminate all this rejoicing...

"Of all the prerogatives which he (the king) has, and which are 643*
a further mark of the extent of his power, that of having several 576
petty tributary kings in his dependency who come to his court to do
him homage and acknowledge him as their sovereign and who give
him superb presents, is by no means the least. He receives these
ambassadors in a great parlor seated on an extremely high throne
and garbed in his ceremonial robes, and replies to their civilities

643* British fleet was going to threaten Bangkok (2), he suddenly cast
648*
175*

2. In fact, Captain Burney's mission was to obtain, by peaceful means, a trade treaty which would open the port of Bangkok to the British.

off his mask and declared war.

648* Opening of hostilities against Siam (1826). The pretext invoked
175* has remained rather obscure and the Siamese accounts pass over the
721 matter in silence, merely accusing Anou of ingratitude and ambition (3). According to a Laotian version, Anou /167/ had sent a

3. Cf. H. R. H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

number of his subjects to the Bangkok government to work at building roads. The labor draft had been judged too small, his delegate had replied arrogantly to the observations of the Siamese, and when the king of Vientiane was informed of the incident he deliberately opened hostilities.

648 March on Korat and Bangkok. Whatever the case may be, the
175* first operations were unleashed with lightning-like rapidity. Three
726 armies were sent against Bangkok, one leaving from Oubone and led by Chao-Ngo, the second concentrated at Roi-Et and led by the Oupahat Tissa, and the third under the command of Anou himself, seconded by his sons Chao-Po and Chao-Ngao, and with Khorat as its objective.

These troops encountered but insignificant resistance (1) and

1. Anou is said to have safeguarded his rapid march by telling the population that he was hastening to the aid of the king of Siam, who was being attacked by the British. Cf. ibid.

news of the invasion had scarcely reached Bangkok when Anou, already established in Khorat, sent his advance guard to threaten Sraboury, which was three days' march from the capital.

/168/ Great was the disturbance among the Siamese, who dug trenches in all haste to protect their city. A first contingent was levied, and in a lucky sortie on "the Saturday of the fourth month of the waning moon" it succeeded in throwing the Laotian advance

guard back to Khorat. This success gave king Phra-Chao-Prasat- 648
Thong time to raise and equip a large army which he placed under 175*
the command of General Phia-Bodin. The latter advanced to- 726
wards Khorat with the greater part of his troops and was preparing to enter into battle when he learned that Anou was beating a retreat.

Failure at Samrit. Indeed, Anou had just suffered a failure in the plain of Samrit where one of his detachments escorting captives had been surprised, encircled and destroyed by a small Siamese force. Greatly impressed -- whether rightly or wrongly -- by this setback, he decided to fall back towards the north. Then Phia-Bodin organized the repression of the revolt systematically. While his lieutenants stormed the entrenched camp of Oubone and captured Chao-Ngo, who had been betrayed by his cousin Chao-Houy, in Bassac, he himself placed the various Muongs of the northeast under military occupation and prudently marched in the direction of Vientiane /169/ (sixth month of the waxing moon of the year 1827) (1).

1. Chronique siamoise, op. cit.

Battle of Nong-Boua-Lamphou (1827). Anou fell back almost to the Mekong and covered his capital with all his forces, which he massed on the right bank of the river. The Siamese army caught up with him at Nong-Boua-Lamphou where his troops were soon swamped and could not prevent Phia-Bodin from establishing himself in Thong-Sompoi and preparing to cross the Mekong. There the Laotians fought desperately and prevented the crossing for seven days, but they finally had to yield to the thrust of Phia-Bodin who was receiving new reinforcements constantly. Disaster was the result.

Flight of Anou. Demoralized, Anou waited only until the enemy had crossed the water. He fled with his family and a few followers, delivering up his city to the fury of the Siamese general who had boasted that he would destroy Vientiane from top to bottom in accordance with his king's orders.

He wandered haphazardly for several days in the impenetrable forests which covered /170/ his land. His companions were the first to recover and worked to revive his courage. They assembled

Embassy to Hue (1831). It was perhaps in an effort to counteract this increased weight of the Siamese yoke that he decided in 1831 to send an embassy to the emperor of Annam offering him the "flowers of gold and silver" just as if it had been a traditional homage (1). Times had changed greatly since the period when his 648* 175*

1. A note supplied in 1889 by Captain Luce, founded on the archives of the Ministry of Rites at Hue, in support of Annam's claims to the territories of the left bank of the Mekong. A further and last embassy is said to have been received in Hue in 1833.

grandfather brutally refused tribute to the Annamite general Chiam-Thiem (2), and the successes of the kings of Bangkok in Laos were

2. See above, p. 193.

henceforth a threat to the very existence of the fragile principality.

Recovery of the Houa-Phan. Did his advances to Minh-Mang give rise to reflection in the Siamese court? The fact remains that after the annexation /204/ of Vientiane the latter seemed to depart from its rigor and that Luang-Prabang was to regain the Houa-Phan. Mantha-Tourath reigned six years longer (1) and died on 643* 648 ● 175*

1. E. Picanon relates that "in 1829 he repulsed Maha-Vong, king of Xieng-Houng." This laconic statement is not confirmed by any known document.

Tuesday, "the first day of the waxing moon of the eighth month at six o'clock in the evening of the year 1198" (1836). He left five sons and four daughters (2).

2. Tiao-Soukaseum, who succeeded his father; Tiao-Tiantha-Koumane, who was also destined to reign; Tiao-Pho, who went insane and killed his mother in an access of rage; Tiao-Oun-Kham who became king in 1870; Tiao-Kham-Boua; Nang-Souphanta-Boutsady; Tiao-Ngot-Kham; Tiao-Kham-Phong and Nang-Thong-Thip.

643• On the occasion of his cremation the king of Siam sent the
● 648 mandarin Tiao-Khoun-Tholama with numerous ritual gifts (3)
175•
/431/

3. 240 ticals, three hundred parasols, thirty bonzes' costumes, silk and calico goods, etc. (Annals).

in order to confirm both his sentiments of friendship and his rights of suzerainty over the principality which from then on was to constitute the last vestige of the great kingdom of Lan-Xang.

/205/ CHAPTER VI

THE SIAMESE EXPANSION IN THE MEKONG BASIN DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1836-1885)

175• It was after the downfall of Vientiane that Siam's star rose and that its leaders' ambitions were revealed in all their completeness. With Cambodia in complete decline, the Burmese thrown back and the Laotian principalities either destroyed or tamed, the reconstruction of a great Thai empire to the profit of Bangkok must naturally have haunted the minds of its kings. But in order to achieve this dream they still had to consolidate their recent conquests from the lands of the left bank of the Mekong and to extend them from north to south towards natural frontiers, and then finally to gain recognition of this hegemony by the neighboring States. In the accomplishment of so great a task they were to come up against a formidable adversary with whom they were already well acquainted for having encountered him along the way. This was the sovereign of Annam.

648• /206/ Siamo-Annamite rivalry in Cambodia. As a matter of
175• fact, the first contacts between the Siamese princes and the lords of Hue did not go back much beyond the end of the seventeenth century. Before this they had been separated not only by the great mountainous barrier to the east, but also by Champa and Lan-Xang. The destruction of the first and division of the second had favored the Annamite overflow towards the Mekong, and the total ruin of the Kmer kingdom (1) had accelerated the latters' gradual advance

1. On four occasions, in 1357, 1394, 1420 and 1460, the Siamese had sacked Angkor. In 1587 they had occupied the provinces of Tonle-Sap. At the beginning of the eighteenth

was also rising against Minh-Mang's authority, is supposed to have 175*
ravaged the provinces of Thai-Nguyen, Cao-Bang and Lang-Son in
1836 or 1837. "He was conquered and is supposed to have been
burned alive in the woods where he had hidden" (1).

1. Schreiner, op. cit. /Abrege de l'Histoire d'Annam.
Saigon, 1906/, pp. 121-122.

Critical position of the principality. It would seem, on the 643*
contrary, that the first concern of the new Laotian king was to play 648*
up to the emperor of Annam, whose protection his father had 175*
spontaneously and discreetly solicited a few years previously.
Souka-Seum, whom the Annals represent as an "energetic and intelligent" prince, had been able during his long exile to evaluate the distance which Siam had covered in half a century and to meditate on the precarious destinies of his own country -- who can ever know the real reasons why he waited three years for permission to succeed King Manta? -- nor was he ignorant of the concern which his suzerain felt both at British ambitions in the Irawaddy basin and at Annam's double seizure /211/ of Tran-Ninh and Cambodia in a "pincers movement."

So many latent rivalries and so much undisguised competition might perhaps afford a supreme opportunity to the principality, blockaded as it was on all sides. But its chief would have to follow a policy of prudence and circumspection with regard to its powerful neighbors, avoiding both the haste which had been fatal for his cousin Anou and the indecision of his father Mantha, who had been severely punished by Siam.

For the moment the attention of Bangkok was entirely concen- 648
trated on events in Cambodia, which General Bodin had not evacu- 175*
ated without clinging to a hope of revenge. In 1841 when the emperor Thieu-Tri, Minh-Mang's son and successor, committed the error of withdrawing his occupation troops the Siamese reoccupied the country immediately, and on the pretext of supporting An-Duong, one of the former king's brothers, they began a stubborn struggle which lasted for six years. After various ups and downs of fortune they managed to make the emperor of Annam sign a peace treaty by the terms of which their protege was proclaimed king of Cambodia, acknowledged himself to be the vassal of both sovereigns, and ceded Battambang, /212/ Angkor and "southern Laos" to Siam (1847).

648 175* In the meantime the carefree populace of Luang-Prabang lived happy and at peace. This is at least the opinion of its annalists who, in confirmation of the adage which states that happy peoples have no history, begin and end their account of Souka-Seum's reign with this categorical assertion.

175* 563 167 The Meo Migration. It was about this time that the first migration of "Meos" occurred in the principality. The chroniclers make no mention of it, doubtless because it was peaceful on the whole and did not affect the tranquillity of the Laotian peoples. Indeed, the newcomers settled on the highest summits of Tran-Ninh and Luang-Prabang, in completely uninhabited regions where even the Khas had never ventured and which were outside the scope of the natives and their leaders.

Farmers and caravaneers, the Meos were above all among the worst denuders of the forests. They must have been driven south out of Se-Tchouen and Yunnan by the need to find new territories which were rich in forests, and also by their undisciplined temperament which could not endure /213/ the authority of the Chinese mandarins. They settled first on the wooded peaks of the Houa-Phan and of Tonkin, then on those of Upper Laos where they found the same kind of habitat as in the cold lands which they had fled. Without religion, without priests, without writing and obedient only to sorcerers who held absolute sway over their essentially vain and credulous character, they lived there in small independent groups, laying waste to the forest in order to grow poppies and maintaining with the neighboring groups only those relations which were strictly indispensable to marketing their opium (1).

/113/ 1. Settlement by the Meos encountered more resistance in Tonkin. "I recall," writes Deo-van-Tri in his Memoires, "having seen my country (Lai-Chau) invaded by the Meos who were called 'White Flags' about 1848. They disturbed the tranquillity of the land, but my honorable father Cam-Sinh finally came to an agreement with them and put them at liberty to settle wherever they wanted on the high plateaus of the region." In the following year, in order to spare his sons from violent family dissensions, Cam-Sinh entrusted Deo-van-Tri and his brother Cam-Heune to the king of Luang-Prabang, who placed them in a pagoda with his own children (Revue indochinoise, August 31, 1904.)

648 an administrator. "Whence did this gigantic river come? What
175* regions did it water? To what peoples did it give access?... France
654 owed it to science and to its own interest to try in its turn to pierce the thick veil which had stretched over Indo-China for so long a time" (3).

3. Cf. P. Legendre, Nos gloires coloniales.

In 1866 Admiral de La Grandiere decided "to send out a mission to explore the course of the Mekong over as long a distance as possible /232/ from its mouth." It was placed under the command of Doudart de Lagree, who chose as his companions Francis Garnier, Ensign de Laporte, the naval doctors Thorel and Joubert and the young embassy attache de Carne.

The expedition left Saigon on June 5, 1866 on gunboats Nos. 32 and 37, visited the ruins of Angkor, went upriver as far as Kratie and then continued in pirogues. On September 10 it reached Bassac and after a thousand and one difficulties in the rapids of Kemmarat passed by Nong-Khay (1), an important trading center

1. Nong-Khay, built on the right bank some forty kilometers
/439/ (by the river) downstream from Vientiane, controlled the greater part of the traffic from Upper Laos -- benzoin, cardamom, salt, tobacco, pelts and lac. It is still an active market today, and is joined to Vientiane by a highway frequented by numerous trucks.

created by the Siamese to replace Vientiane, the impressive ruins of which the expedition saw, swallowed up as they were by the vegetation. It finally reached Luang-Prabang on April 20, 1867.

The explorers did not remain there for any length of time. After erecting Mouhot's mausoleum and exploring the region they decided to entrust all the instruments which were no longer absolutely indispensable to them, as well as their maps and their botanical and geological collections, to /233/ King Tiantha-Koumane who sent them to Saigon "with scrupulous fidelity." Then they set out again, "escorted by a throng of functionaries and of young women who cried for some kind of souvenir of their guests. Uniform buttons and the smallest galloons were given to them" (1).

1. Cf. P. Legendre, op. cit. /Nos gloires coloniales/

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

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THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eun States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

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and stripped of its livestock and elephants, which were taken to the Ménam valley, and had been fully conquered by the Thai sovereign.

Siam then created the hereditary fief of Tiama-Sak (Bassac) in the southeast of the former kingdom and placed a cousin of the king of Vien-Tiane over it in order to reward him for his double treachery towards the king and towards his brother, the prince of Oubone, both of whom he had delivered up to the Siamese general Phiéa-Le-Bô-Dyn, vanquisher of the Laotians.

Of the former kingdom of Vien-Tiane Siam made a Siamese province bearing the name Lao-Pou-Eûn and, completely ignoring Annam's rights, it had its troops occupy the basin of the Sé-Bang-Hien in the Phu of Kam-Lô, which was situated on the left bank of the Mékong.

[3] SIAM'S ENCROACHMENTS TO THE EAST
GROUNDS FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE MÉKONG BASIN
ARRANGEMENT OF MARCH 27, 1889

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Siamese expansion was not limited to these conquests. Thanks to a skilful policy, it was awarded the provinces of Mélou-Prey and Tonlé-Répou, located on both banks of the Mékong, by Cambodia about 1840. Following their annexation Siam reigned as master over the whole basin of the river from the province of Outhaï-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay (Luang-Prabang) to Siemboc, that is to say, from the eighteenth to the thirteenth parallel.

But the establishment of the French in Cochinchina placed an obstacle in the way of Siamese ambitions and of any plans for conquest which they may have nurtured. Since Cambodia was the hinterland of our new possession we were led to intervene in its foreign relations and finally guarantee it a stable political situation. Here a word of praise may well be said for Admiral de La Grandière who, by his diplomatic skill and his steadfastness, was able in 1863 to impose a treaty on King Norodom which counterbalanced another Siamo-Kmer agreement of the same year and placed the kingdom of Cambodia under a French protectorate. (1)

(1) See Appendix I.

This accord was far from being satisfactory to Siam, for the introduction of a great European nation in the Far East, on the banks

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of the Mékong, with effective dominance over several millions of individuals, meant the ruin of its secret hopes. What is more, its plans for territorial expansion up to the Annamitic Chain found in us adversaries to be reckoned with. It also feared that Cambodia, which was already our ally and strong by virtue of its new status, might claim the territories of which it had been despoiled.

Since it could not enter into open struggle against us, Siam stealthily sowed discords in the Kmer kingdom and, [4] in co-operation with the British agents in Bangkok, schemed to create palace revolutions and thereby try to induce the versatile Norodom to abandon our protection for a Siamese vassaldom which would be stricter than before but disguised under the appearance of great honor.

So as not to lose all the fruits of our action, and to bring an end to the ambiguous status of a double protectorate--French and Siamese--in Cambodia, our government had to take strong action. It was then that the Franco-Siamese treaty of July 15, 1867, was concluded(1).

(1) See Appendix II.

Despite many irreparable errors, this treaty sanctioned Siam's recognition of the French protectorate over Cambodia, annulled the Siamo-Kmer agreement of 1863, established the status quo as a policy, granted to nationals of both countries reciprocal facilities for trade, residence, property, travel, navigation and passports, set up rules governing jurisprudence, etc.

Unfortunately it gave Siam the rich provinces of Battambang and Angkor (2), with vague provisions for later delimitation of

(2) At the beginning of the nineteenth century Siam had purely and simply annexed these provinces, without any treaty having sanctioned the coup.

these territories. The comparative calm of this period made it possible to settle various matters for good and all which had heretofore been left hanging.

Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions 648
on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Pnom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hos (1) enabled the sovereign of 648
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(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

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Siam to preserve an appearance of neutrality, and even of cordiality, towards us.

It gave him the opportunity to pose as the defender of Annam's vassals and of the subjects of his most honorable vassal the king of Luang-Prabang. When the time came King Chulahlong-Khorn would thus be able to profit skilfully, and according to the circumstances, from the advantages which he had gained in order to transform an ill-founded vassaldom over Luang-Prabang into an absolute possession and, thanks to our difficulties, to impose the law of greater might all the way to the Annamitic Chain.

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The Hô invasion, which extended all the way to Nong-Khay across the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï, the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, Tran-Ninh and Vien-Tiane, was never seriously opposed by the Siamese no matter what they may say. Their pretended action did, however, enable the king to keep Vien-Tiane and to drive the Chinese bandits out of Laotian territory.

[8] The whole affair may have created some momentary illusion, but the actual fact was that Chulahlong-Khorn's troops, except for a few rare and unimportant skirmishes, merely followed the Hôs as they returned towards Yunnan and abandoned the territories which they had invaded after they had sacked them.

Profiting by inattention on the part of France and Annam, which were occupied [Illustration here] elsewhere, and on the fallacious pretext that it was protecting the provinces which had been devastated by the Hôs and was preventing them from returning in the future, Siam covertly established itself as master in the land.

In the meantime the Chinese bandits, after leaving Vien-Tiane and Tran-Ninh, invaded the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. The latter still paid tribute to Siam, in the form of "Gold and silver flowers," yet it had remained free of direct domination and enjoyed an autonomy comparable to [Map, unpaged, inserted between pp. 8 and 9] [9] that of Vien-Tiane before its conquest, and paid an honorary bounty to China and Annam.

Still on the pretext of driving out the Hôs, the Siamese troops entered the territory of Luang-Prabang and established themselves there as in a conquered land. Their general was given the title of royal commissioner. He administered the country, recruited troops, levied [Illustration here] taxes and behaved exactly as if the country belonged to him (1886).

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hos and later occupied by the Siamese.

With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900. Le Laos français.

149: Reinach--7 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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SIAM'S VIOLATION OF THE 1889 ARRANGEMENT
VARIOUS INCIDENTS
OCCUPATION OF LOWER LAOS--NAVAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAK-NAM
ULTIMATUM AND TREATY OF OCTOBER 3, 1893

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The arrangement of 1889 was unfortunately much too lenient. Even several years after the fall of the great and clairvoyant patriot Jules Ferry, however, and as a consequence of the profound discredit into which the whole colonial idea and cause had fallen among us, our political situation made it impossible for us to take more effective measures and to assert the rights of our protégé, the emperor of Annam, in a more pressing way. [11] Nor could we give full satisfaction to the completely legitimate requests for protection which were made by the king of Luang-Prabang.

Our political difficulties were perfectly well-known to the Siamese government. Emboldened by our hesitation, it consented, in agreement with Great Britain, to arrangements and delimitations of frontiers in the Shan States which annihilated the plan conceived by Jules Ferry in 1883 and canceled all the results of the Deloncle treaty concluded in 1884 (1) with Upper Burma, which was then

(1) See Appendices VII and VIII.

independent. This treaty, in effect, recognized as limits of "French Tonkin the Mékong River, from the point where it leaves China as far as Xieng-Sèn," including the Pahn-Na on the left bank, the principality of Muong-Sing and the States of Pou-Kha, Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn to the west of Nam-Hou.

In exchange for this territory--a gracious gift which cost it all the less in that it did not belong to it--Great Britain obtained Karennée (or Karèng) from Siam. The latter territory was situated in the valley of the Salouen, and had been under Siamese domination for centuries.

The delimitation of the Anglo-Siamese frontiers, including those of the Shan States of Xieng-Mai, Lam-Poun and Muong-Haut, was completed only in 1892.

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In 1889 M. Pavie was sent on another mission and was accompanied by many civil and military assistants whose particular province was to be topography and the natural sciences. A

commercial and industrial mission was attached to the former, and it was to study the question of means of communication by land and river, to create trading posts, to collect samples, to examine the commercial methods in use and to determine the nature and value of the products of the Mékong basin. Funds for this mission, which left France with an initial stock of fifteen tons of various kinds of merchandise, were provided by a syndicate which had just been formed, with an initial capital of 100,000 francs, under the name of French Syndicate [12] of Upper Laos. It included representatives of Parisian trade and industry who had united for the experiment thanks to the initiative of M. Léon Tharel, the president of the group.

All throughout 1890 and 1891 the missions fulfilled their tasks with ardor, not without constant struggle against the implicit hostility of the Siamese, which although occasionally concealed under an [Illustration here] affable outward mask nonetheless continued to manifest itself and created obstacles everywhere in the hope of discouraging the valiant explorers and causing their work to fail.

In spite of the difficulties which they encountered, the two missions were successful in their delicate enterprise and the results of the latter were most significant. From that point on we were in possession of precise information concerning the whole region extending from Yunnan to Cambodia.

What was more, by continuing the tradition begun by Mouhot, the [13] Lagrée mission, Harmand, Néis, etc. we had made contact with the Laotian people and made them know and love the French name. In us they saluted their future liberators and the ones who would come to free them from the brutal and detested Siamese yoke.

Finally--a fact of no less importance--thanks to the activities of the commercial mission, to the trading posts which it had established and to the contacts and arrangements which it had prepared, we were in possession from that time on of private commercial interests in the Mékong basin. Thus greater force was given to the rights which we already had to intervene in Laos against Siamese intrigues in the name of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and the king of Cambodia.

Frightened and surprised by the results which France had achieved in so short a time in the Mékong valley, despite the ambushes which it had laid on all sides and the hostile maneuvers which it had supported, Siam began to fear that France might invade its Laotian territories. It then invoked the friendship of Great Britain and

648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.

175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Aï-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14] the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had
648 remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.

439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

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both for his special knowledge of the country and the questions at issue and as a reward for the exceptional service which he had rendered to France in the course of his previous missions. Shortly thereafter, so as to place our chief agent in Siam on the same level as those of other nations, the title of Resident Minister of France was conferred on him.

At the same time, in order to extend our activity in the Mekong basin, the Government discontinued the vice-consulate in Luang-prabang, which had always remained without Siam's "exequatur", and replaced it with a commercial agency. Three other agencies of the same type were established in Outhène, Bassac and Sung-Treng.

The first three of these posts were managed by the agents, [15] [Illustration] [16] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 16 and 17] [17] who were heads of trading posts in the French Syndicate, and the last was managed by a chief clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs. They were given the title of commercial agents of the Government and, even while they continued to carry on commercial operations, they received salaries from the Colonies budget. They corresponded directly with the Governor General of Indo-China and the Resident Minister in Bangkok, to whom they sent telegrams and official reports.

Meanwhile the Siamese, thinking that they were to be permitted to do anything and secretly impelled by the British agents, continued to advance eastward terrorizing the people and mistreating our subjects, protégés and nationals in Siam as well as in Laos and in Cambodia, in the region of Great Lake [Grand Lac]. 648 175

Their audacity reached its climax in a serious offense to our flag in Tong-Kieng-Kham, and the accumulation of all these grievances drove the French Government to vigorous action. Following an interruption and a patriotic speech by M. Deloncle, a deputy, the Chamber decided to safeguard the rights of our protégés and to recall Siam to respect for the treaties and arrangements which had been agreed on. The following are the terms in which M. Deloncle placed the question before Parliament on February 4, 1893.

[C.A.M. Translator's note. The following speech (through p. 17, line 5 in this translation) is presumably taken from French legislative records. It is set in small, contrasting type in the source.]

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President.--M. Deloncle has the floor.

M. François Deloncle.--Gentlemen, after the brilliant speeches which you have just heard I believe that the Chamber is in some haste to close the general discussion. I have therefore come simply to ask the Government a few questions.

The first of these questions supplements the observations which my honorable colleagues and friends the Messrs. Martineau and Le Roy have addressed to the tribune concerning the encroachments of the Siamese on our Indo-Chinese empire.

The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over its old vassal, the principality of Luang-Prabang. The Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Annam's rights over the small Laotian States to the north of old Cambodia on the right bank of the Mékong, some of which used to send, up until the last few years, tribute to Hué. The Siamese are ignorant or wish to be ignorant of Annam's absolute rights over all the territory situated between the sea and the left bank of the Mékong, that is to say the lands of Attopeu and Saravane, the phus of Cam-lô, Lac-bien and Tran-tinh, Tran-dinh, Tran-ninh, Tran-bien, Muong-lu, etc., which from time immemorial have been a part of [18] the Annamite empire and must be purely and simply attached to the direct administration of our residences. Finally, the Siamese are ignorant or pretend to be ignorant of Cambodia's rights over the old provinces of the Cambodian kingdom which Siam holds illegally and in spite of the treaty of 1867, which provides for a delimitation of frontiers which the court of Bangkok has always refused to consider.

It is in this way that, patiently and noiselessly, the Siamese are usurping one by one all the dependencies of our protégés, the emperor of Annam and King Norodom. In vain do our protégés protest and clamor for our protection against this invasion. We have let matters take their course, in the last few years, with such an appearance of resignation that Siamese audacity is growing every day and that good patriots are worriedly asking how far it may not go. Look at the Siamese outposts at the gates of Hué. There they are a few days away from Hanoi. They do not hesitate to treat our political agents with the most perfect scorn and to mistreat our traders, as witness the expulsion from Houten of M. Champenois who is claiming on these grounds, and not without reason, an indemnity of 100,000 francs. To put it bluntly, the weakness of our representatives and sometimes of our Government in these regions is so great that two

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Siamese functionaries were not at all afraid, in September 1891, to tear down the French flag at the Pouens. Not only were they not bothered, but one of them received the rosette of officer of the Legion of Honor and the other was made a chevalier through the diplomacy of the Republic. (Various movements.)

Truly, it seems to me that we have been too long-suffering. It is not possible that we should have conquered Cambodia, Tonkin and Annam, and acquired rights over all of Laos on both banks of the Mékong, by virtue of solemn and undisputed treaties, only to abandon the best fruits of our conquest to Siam. We have been the dupes of Siam for five or six years, and that is enough.

Let us return to the virile policy which, in 1882, under M. Harmand as consul general and under the administration of the honorable M. Le Myre de Vilers, placed Siam under our influence because France then knew how to speak clearly and not beat about the bush. Let us remind Siam of the limits to which it must confine itself and which it respected very well until the expedition of the Hôs, until our war in Tonkin and until the Cambodian rebellion of Si-Votha.

Doubtless there were, during this period, a few Siamese mandarins who occasionally went in search of adventure among the Laotians of the Mékong, but this was pure tolerance on the part of the Cambodians and Annamites and there was not, as there are today, brothers of the king and generals in chief camped as absolute masters on both banks of the river. The regular and official administration of the court of Bangkok did not go beyond the Ménam basin in the strict sense and the Malay Peninsula, and the kingdom contained only those provinces listed in the four classes reproduced by the printed laws of Siam, of which the Siam Directory, the official annual, [19] gives authentic extracts which are published under the supervision of the king himself. This document is absolutely conclusive. Let us bring Siam back to it. Let it reign in peace, in full integrity and independence, over the provinces listed in the Siam Directory, but let it no longer attempt to establish itself with impunity in the territories dependent on our empire.

Do not fear, Mr. Undersecretary of State, to impress on Bangkok our determined intention not to be made fools of any longer by the pleasant smiles, the lulling [illegible]macy and the complicated intrigues with which, since 1884, the best intentions of our agents have been paralyzed. (Hear! Hear!)

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The Siamese are like all the other people of the Orient. They believe that they are strong because we have accustomed them to regard themselves as such. They have a great deal of pride, because we have been and are too humble towards them. They make much, in their dealings with us, of pretended aid which they confidently expect from England or from Germany. But I ask you, gentlemen, what can England or Germany have to say in a question of frontiers between Siam, Cambodia and Annam which has to do only with France? Are we concerned in the frontier delimitation now in progress in the Shan-Burmese States between Siam and Britain? Have we ever for a single instant hindered German or Italian commercial activity in Bangkok?

No, gentlemen, there are no international interests involved in this matter. We have only one question to settle with Britain in this region, that of the upper Mékong from the point where this river leaves China upstream from Xieng-hong to the point in Xieng-sen where it touches the northwest frontier of Siam. There, as you know, the left bank of the Mékong constitutes the limit between French Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States, by the terms of the Burmese declaration which I brought back in 1884 from Mandalay, and by the terms of other arrangements which enabled the honorable M. Ribot, then minister of Foreign Affairs, to declare before the Chamber two years ago that he would never accept any other frontier line between Tonkin and the Shan-Burmese States which depend on Britain.

I shall add only that, since that time, Lord Salisbury has admitted in the House of Lords that his government could not possibly have anything to say in the frontier difficulties pending between Siam and France. Our hands are therefore free, on condition that we respect the integrity and independence of Siam in the strict sense.

The Government well knows what measures are to be taken under the present conditions, and I defer to the resolute spirit of my honorable friend the Undersecretary of State.

These will not be extensive military measures for, and you will learn this not without some surprise, Siam has accomplished its work of invasion with the aid of a mere 150 or 200 Siamese soldiers. With this small number of troops they are occupying a region larger than half of France.

[20] You must admit, gentlemen, that it would be enough merely to turn to with a good will and have a genuine consciousness of France's rights, in order to restore order once again. Unfortunately

I fear that our agents all too often lack this genuine consciousness. (Hear! Hear!)

Once that we had decided to intervene in Indo-China, operations were begun at three different points: in the region of Ai-Lao, in Cammon and in the north of Cambodia.

Our agents remained isolated in the Mékong valley.

Those of Luang-Prabang, who had taken refuge in the buildings of the old consulate on the right bank of the Mékong, were proscribed, blockaded and besieged. Threats of death were made against all natives who should enter into contact with them or serve them in any way whatever.

Our commercial agent in Outhène was expelled by order of the viceroy of Nong-Khay, and his merchandise was first confiscated and then almost all sold by the Siamese. The agent in Bassac escaped similar treatment thanks only to the goodwill of Prince Prit-Chit, the viceroy of Oubone and a friend of France, and they were content merely to keep a close watch on him. He was guarded so closely that he could neither send nor receive correspondence or merchandise.

The instructions given out by M. de Lanessan, the Governor General of Indo-China, for the campaign which was beginning were quite clear. He directed that open battle should be avoided insofar as possible. He said that we must seek to gain the sympathies of the inhabitants and always prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain military engagements. In order to attain this end, the Governor General recommended the use of native troops commanded by inspectors of the militia and placed under the higher authority of a few chosen residents.

It was in this capacity that Messrs. Luce, Dufrénil and Bastard took part in the operations.

One column, with Muong-Phin as its objective, was placed under the command of M. Dufrénil, the vice-resident in Dong-Hoï, who was assisted by M. Garnier, an inspector of militia. Following the instructions [21] of the Governor General, that is to say without entering open combat, this force reached Muong-Phin after a rapid march, which it entered on May 14, 1893. On the 26th of the same month it reached the Mékong opposite Kemmarat.

In these parts there was a veritable rout of the Siamese, who

175 726 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield, behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

175 728 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

• 648 1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th parallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

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October 3, 1893, in Bangkok, it was ratified by the French parliament in January 1894.

The following are the clauses of the treaty (2):

(2) See Appendix X.

Treaty concluded in Bangkok on October 3, 1893, between the government of the French Republic and the government of His Majesty the king of Siam, in order to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen between the two lands and strengthen friendly relations.

The President of the French Republic and H.M. the king of Siam, wishing to bring an end to the disputes which have arisen in recent times between the two States and to strengthen the friendly relations which have existed between France and Siam for centuries past, have named as their plenipotentiaries:

The President of the French Republic,

M. Charles Marie Le Myre de Vilers, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor and of the White Elephant, Minister plenipotentiary of the 1st class, deputy;

And H.M. the king of Siam, His Royal Highness Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, knight of the order of Maha Chakrkri, grand officer of the Legion of Honor, etc., minister of Foreign Affairs; who, after communicating their full powers to one another and having recognized them as in good and due form, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I. The Siamese Government renounces all claim to all of the territories on the left bank of the Mékong and to the islands in this river.

ARTICLE 2. The Siamese Government agrees not to maintain or circulate ships or armed vessels on the waters of the Great Lake [Grand Lac], the Mékong or their tributaries within the limits specified in the following article.

ARTICLE 3. The Siamese Government shall not construct any fortified outpost or military establishment in the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap or within a radius of twenty-five kilometers from the right bank of the Mékong.

ARTICLE 4. In the zones specified in Article 3, police duty shall be carried out, according to [27] custom, by the local authorities with only such contingents as are strictly necessary. No regular or

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irregular armed force shall be maintained there.

ARTICLE 5. The Siamese Government agrees to open negotiations with the French Government, within a period of six months, with a view to drawing up regulations governing customs and trade in the territories specified in Article 3, and to revising the treaty of 1856.

Until such an agreement has been reached, no customs duties shall be established in the zone specified in Article 3. Reciprocity shall continue to be accorded by the French Government to the products of the aforesaid zone.

ARTICLE 6. Since the development of navigation along the Mékong may necessitate certain construction projects on the right bank, or the establishment of boat relays and depots for wood and coal, the Siamese Government agrees to provide, at the request of the French Government, all necessary facilities for this purpose.

ARTICLE 7. French citizens, subjects and nationals may circulate and engage in trade freely in the territories specified in Article 3, when provided with a pass issued by the French authorities. Reciprocity shall be accorded to the inhabitants of the aforesaid zones.

ARTICLE 8. The French Government reserves the right to establish consulates wherever it deems suitable in the interest of its nationals, and particularly at Korat and Muong-Nan.

ARTICLE 9. In case of any difficulties in interpretation, the French text alone shall be deemed valid.

ARTICLE 10. The present treaty must be ratified within a period of four months dating from the day of its signing.

In faith of which the below-named respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty in duplicate and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers

(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar

An agreement of which the following is the text was joined to the preceding treaty:

149: Reinach--20 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

AGREEMENT

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The plenipotentiaries have determined, in the present agreement, the different measures and steps involved in carrying out the peace treaty signed this day, and the ultimatum accepted on last August 5.

ARTICLE 1. The last Siamese military posts on the left bank [28] of the Mekong shall be evacuated within the maximum space of one month dating from September 5.

ARTICLE 2. All fortifications in the zone specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day shall be razed.

ARTICLE 3. The authors of the attempts on Tong-Xieng-Kham and Kammoun shall be judged by the Siamese authorities. A representative of France shall be present at the judgment and shall see to it that the penalties pronounced are carried out.

The French Government reserves the right to judge whether the sentences are sufficient and, if need arise, to demand a new trial before a mixed tribunal whose composition it shall determine.

ARTICLE 4. The Siamese Government shall place at the disposition of the Minister of France in Bangkok or of the French frontier authorities all French, Annamite and Laotian subjects of the left bank and the Cambodians who are being detained on any grounds whatsoever. It shall in no way impede the return to the left bank of former inhabitants of this region.

ARTICLE 5. The Ban-Bien of Tong-Xieng-Kham and his retinue shall be brought to the French Legation by a delegate of the Foreign Minister, as well as the weapons and the French flag seized by the Siamese authorities.

ARTICLE 6. The French Government shall continue to occupy Chantaboun(1) until such time as the provisions of the present Agreement have been carried out, particularly the complete evacuation

(1) We are still there in 1901.

and pacification both of the left bank and the zones specified in Article 3 of the treaty dated this day.

In faith of which the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the present agreement and affixed their seals thereto.

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Done in duplicate at the palace of Vallabha, in Bangkok, October 3, 1893.

(Signed) Le Myre de Vilers.
(Signed) Devawongse Varoprakar.

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It became perfectly apparent, after the signing of the treaty and the additional agreement, that these two acts were nothing but palliatives. Only the out-and-out annexation of Siam, in addition to the fact that it would have greatly enlarged our colonial empire, would have enabled us to hold the British and the Germans, who were our commercial rivals, in check.

For a long time the Siamese had been saying, "The day when we are forced to evacuate we shall leave nothing but the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forests." And, as a matter of fact, [29] they had applied this maxim almost to the letter in 1827 and 1840 when, out of fear of Annamite reprisals on the left bank, they had forced people and livestock to follow them over to the right bank and all the way to the Ménam valley. This procedure was altogether too simple for them not to have had the idea of trying it again in 1893. Time was the only thing they lacked to carry out their sinister plan, but they left us only a depopulated and devastated land, keeping for themselves the Laos of the right bank and the rich provinces of Angkor and Battambang, that is to say the well-populated and fertile territories which had never suffered, as the present-day Laos, several invasions in less than a century.

The hesitancy of the court of Bangkok when the ultimatum was delivered, as well as its attempts to keep the territories of the left bank of the Mékong above the 18th parallel, were once more a clear indication of British interference. Although not apparent, British influence had never ceased to make itself felt in the course of all these negotiations. The goal of this hidden influence was to preserve British preponderance in the Pahn-Na and, since Britain was already master of the kingdom of Ava, to facilitate the achievement of its plans for a railway towards S'sémao and Yunnan-Sen.

It was nevertheless forced to come out into the open, and demanded that a neutral zone or sort of buffer state be established between the British and French territories along the Upper Mékong. It aimed at preventing us from occupying territory which had been

regularly ceded to us by the treaty of October 3, by transforming them into a neutral zone where it might perhaps later find means of establishing itself.

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In order to settle this ticklish question an Anglo-French commission presided over by Messrs. Pavie and Scott was to work on the very spot in order to discover the conditions under which such a buffer state might be established. A backward glance will now be necessary to set the question of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na in its proper context.

[30] THE QUESTION OF THE SIB-SONG-PAHN-NA

The confederation of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na (or twelve Pahn-Na) was situated on both banks of the Mekong between 21° and 23° N. latitude and 97° and 100° E. longitude.

Eight of these Pahn-Na were on the left bank (1) and four on the

(1) The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank were Xieng-Hong, Muong-La, Muong-Poung, Muong-Noune, Muong-Yang, Muong-Bang, Muong-Hou and Muong-Heng.

[Illustration here] right bank of the great river (2). The first had

(2) The four Pahn-Na on the right bank were Muong-Lèm (or Muong-Lim), Muong-Houng, Muong-Haï and Muong-Mèng.

their capital in Xieng-Hong (or Kiang-Oung), and the second in Muong-Lèm.

The confederation was a tributary of Burma and of China, but the latter country's suzerainty was nominal rather than real. Tribute in money and in kind was paid only to the king of Ava, and each Pahn-Na also provided him with a thousand armed men in time of war.

[31] This situation did not continue beyond 1875, for at that time Prince Thibau overthrew the reigning dynasty in Burma, put King Mèn-Dou-Mèn to death with all his family, except for one direct heir in the person of Prince Myngoun-Mèn, and then seized the throne. But the usurper was detested by the people because of his cruelty and his vices, and also because he was thought, whether rightly or wrongly, to be supported by the British.

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The mandarins whom he sent into the Pahn-Na to replace [Illustration here] those of the former king could not maintain themselves there, for they were not obeyed and could not collect the various tributes and taxes.

Thus after three years of fruitless attempts they returned to Mandalay and let the Pahn-Na govern themselves as they wished. It was for this reason that the confederation no longer sent Burma the customary head tax, but contented itself with sending a small honorary tribute from time to time.

China, for its part, obtained nothing from the Pahn-Na except a tribute in kind consisting of tea of that region. It also collected certain duties (Li-Kin) on this product when it was exported. Chinese suzerainty, very broad in its form and very meager in its [32] effects, limited its tribute and taxes to these simple bounties. A delegate from the Tao-Tai of Pou-Eurl-Fou with the rank of a sergeant and accompanied by four lancers who were in tatters and covered with vermin, was the only Chinese representative in Xieng-Hong in 1890 and 1891.

In 1883-84, while Britain was preparing to seize Upper Burma, King Thibau made overtures to France in the hope of obtaining our support and permission to secure supplies of weapons and ammunition by way of Tonkin and the Pahn-Na.

The Burmese plenipotentiaries thus gave official confirmation to the declaration made in Mandalay in 1884 to M. Deloncle, who was then on a diplomatic mission. The declaration contained the following passage:

"The eight Pahn-Na on the left bank of the Mékong shall become a part of French Tonkin and the river shall serve as frontier between French Tonkin and Burma, from the point where it leaves China to a point below Xieng-Sen" (1).

(1) See Appendices VIII and XI.

In the meantime Jules Ferry, who had conducted all the negotiations and parleys with Burma, fell from power and Britain, ever aware of difficulties which might hinder our forward march, profited from the circumstance and from our difficulties in Tonkin in order to seize Upper Burma. It did not, however, become interested in the Pahn-Na before 1890 or 1891.

The Pavie mission had already explored the region and had

studied its topography at the beginning of 1891. One of its members had even founded a French trading post at Xieng-Hong, over which the French flag flew, and had been accredited to the local chieftains by Prince Myngoun-Mèn who was the sole heir, in their eyes, to the throne of Ava (2).

(2) See Appendix XII.

Unfortunately, we made the mistake of not making public this agreement by our agent with the chiefs of the Pahn-Na, who were quite prepared to accept our protection. Britain quietly went to work in the land. British agents were sent there and sowed discord among the chiefs, and finally in [A two-page map, unpaged, is inserted between pp. 32 and 33.] [33] July 1894 these territories were ceded to China by the United Kingdom. A restrictive clause provided, however, that in no case might they be given back, in whole or in part, to any other nation (1).

(1) See Appendix XI.

This generosity was in absolute contradiction to the agreements which had come before. It violated in clear fashion all previous engagements and made nonsense of the Franco-Chinese treaty of 1887 which awarded us the Pahn-Na on the left bank. Moreover, the territories of Muong-Hou-Neua and Muong-Hou-Tai, which were dependencies of Luang-Prabang, had recently been occupied by the Siamese after the retreat of the Hos.

In 1894 and 1895 the delimitation of the Franco-Chinese frontier restored the two Muong-Hou to us. Britain used this new state of things as a pretext for accusing China of not having respected the non-retrocession clause in the agreement of June 1895 (2). It

(2) See Appendix XIII.

profited by the occasion in order to take back, as compensation, certain territories in the Kachin States of the north (on the left bank of the Salouen River) which it had ceded to China together with the Pahn-Na.

By virtue of the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893, we took possession in the following year of the territory on the left bank

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of the Mékong which was situated to the south of the Pahn-Na and to the west of Nam-Hou.

It was at this time that Britain's plans became clearly apparent. It claimed, as being under its influence--and on this pretext its agents fomented disorders and revolts there--the States of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing and Muong-Mugne as dependencies of Xieng-Tong (Kiang-Toung) and of Xieng-Khèng (Kiang-Khèng), situated on both banks of the Mékong.

So as to counterbalance British influence insofar as possible, and also to see that the treaty of 1893 was carried out and to protect our nationals and those under our jurisdiction, the French Government created the commercial agencies of Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sèn (right bank) in June 1894. At the same time we took possession of Xieng-Khong, Muong-Mugne, Muong-Poukha and Muong-Luong-[34] Nam-Ta on the left bank. All these territories had been ceded us by Siam, as well as that of Muong-Sing.

Our agents, who lived on the very spot, then saw clearly that the part of the territory of Xieng-Khèng which was called Muong-[Illustration here] Sing and was situated on the left bank of the Mékong belonged to us beyond any shadow of a doubt. This region of Muong-Sing was then a dependency of Siam, and in July 1894 our agents had been able to stop its ambassadors at Xieng-Khong at the very time when they were taking the annual tribute to the king of Nan, who was then to send it on to the court of Bangkok. The tribute was forwarded by them, with the message that we were acting out of pure courtesy, so as to emphasize [35] Muong-Sing's old political dependency on Siam and consequently on France, ever since 1893.

In the meantime an event occurred which cast a new light on the question and completely changed all diplomatic plans.

In contravention of the arrangements made at Bangkok by the heads of the British and French international Commissions and by the representatives of the two nations in Paris, pressing orders were sent directing the troops of Upper Burma to occupy the territory on the left bank which had recently been abandoned by Siam. [Illustration alongside text here.]

The British Commission, moreover, instead of going to Xieng-Khong on the right bank as had been agreed and waiting for the French Commission there, avoided going by this route. It went to

Xieng-Tong well before the appointed date and there it found Lieutenant Stirling, the commander of the troops from Upper Burma. Losing no time, the British mission at once ordered the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing to prepare lodgings and provisions for three thousand soldiers, to put the roads in good condition and to go to Xieng-Tong with all his mandarins and make his submission to H.M. the queen of England.

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Upon the complaint of the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing and at the sight of the letters from the king of Siam saying that Muong-Sing had belonged [36] to France since 1893, M. Macey, our agent in Xieng-Khong who was responsible for organizing the new territory on the left bank, took an initiative which was bold but decreed by the gravity of the situation.

Both to safeguard our rights and to make the members of the British mission feel all the tactlessness of their proceedings, our agent gave orders to the authorities of Muong-Sing which saved the situation. He confirmed all the local functionaries in their privileges and prerogatives and gave them French flags to be distributed in their muongs and villages (1).

(1) See Appendix XIV.

When the British Commission failed to see the Tiao-Fa of Muong-Sing come to Xieng-Tong and make his submission, it decided on November 24, 1894, to cross over to the left bank by way of Xieng-Lap with a force composed of two companies of "Gurka rifles" and a troop of Indian cavalry (Sikhs). But when confronted with the fact that our agent had already taken possession, and when it saw, as it reached the left bank, that the French flag was already flying, the British Commission sent the greater part of its troops back to the right bank and waited at Muong-Sing for the French Commission, which arrived a week later from Muong-Hou.

In spite of the accomplished fact the heads of the international Commissions resumed their discussion, and by common accord they decided to evacuate the disputed territory and to refer the matter to their Governments.

After the departure of M. Pavie, our commissioner general in Laos and head of the French Commission, Sir Friars, who was commissioner general of Upper Burma, came to settle in Xieng-Tong. During this time Lieutenant Stirling had returned to occupy

Muong-Sing (April 1895).

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•648 The effect of this broken promise was to return the question of the limits of our possessions to the agenda. After numerous protests on our part talks were begun in Europe, subsequent to which the two Governments finally elaborated the following declaration:

[37] 1. The Governments of France and Great Britain agree not to send, in any case or under any pretext without one another's consent, their armed forces into the region including the basins of the Petchaboury, Mékong, Ménam and Bang-Pakong (River of Pétriou) rivers and their respective tributaries, as well as the coastal region which stretches from Muong-Bang-Tapan to Muong-Pasé, and thus including all the territory situated to the north of the Ménam basin between the Anglo-Siamese frontier, the Mékong River and the eastern limit of the Mé-Ing basin. They further agree not to acquire any privilege or private advantage in this region the benefit of which shall not be common to France and to Great Britain and to their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, or which shall not be available to them on a footing of equality.

These provisions, however, shall not be interpreted as affecting the special clauses which, by virtue of the treaty concluded on October 3, 1893, between France and Siam, apply to a 25-kilometer zone on the right bank of the Mékong and to navigation on this river.

2. Nothing in the preceding clause shall prevent any action on which the two powers shall agree and which they shall deem necessary to maintain the independence of the kingdom of Siam. But they agree not to enter into any separate arrangement which would enable a third power to do what they reciprocally agree not to do in the present declaration.

3. Leaving the mouth of the Nam-Huok and going northwards to the Chinese frontier, the thalweg of the Mékong shall form the limit between the possessions or spheres of influence of France and Great Britain. It is agreed that nationals of both countries and persons under their jurisdiction shall not exercise any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever in the possessions or spheres of influence of the other country. In the part of the river here in question, police powers over the islands which are separated from the British bank by a branch of the aforesaid river shall belong to the French authorities as long as such separation exists.

The exercise of fishing rights shall be common to inhabitants of both banks.

4. The two Governments agree that commercial or other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Set-Chuèn either to France or to Great Britain by virtue of their respective treaties with China of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may thereafter be conceded in the same Chinese provinces either to France or to Great Britain, shall, insofar as it depends on them, be extended and acknowledged to be common to both powers, their nationals and persons under their jurisdiction, and they agree to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government to this end.

5. This article relates to the Niger.

6. This article deals with negotiations to be undertaken in order to replace the present [38] general agreement with a new agreement responding to the intentions announced in the above articles.

Done at London on January 15, 1896.

(Signed) A. de Courcel.
(Signed) Salisbury

As a result of this declaration the territory of Muong-Sing was returned to us in March 1896, and from that time on French Laos was constituted as shall be described in the following chapters (1).

(1) It will be of the utmost interest, after this rapid résumé of the situation, to read Appendices XV and XVI which show in detail what our action was in the Mékong basin, and to compare what we intended to accomplish there with what the necessities of international policy enabled us to do.

[39] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER II

§ I--GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION--BOUNDARIES--EXTENT

Laos extends between 22° 30' N. latitude, somewhat below Muong-Kang (prefecture of S'sémao), and 13° 15' N. latitude, the latter being the parallel of Thboung-Kla, opposite Siem-Boc. Slightly to the east of this point, however, on the 105th meridian, the Laotian province of Darlac stretches a long point southwards to the 12th parallel.

131 Longitudinally it extends from 97° 45' (right bank of the Mékong at Xieng-Sèn) to 106° E. longitude in one point of [40] the Annamitic Chain bordering on the basin of the Srépok or Sé-Bang Khan.

The boundaries of Laos are (1):

(1) In what follows it will be necessary to consult the map of the Pavie mission, published by Challamel in Paris. There it will particularly be noted that Laos borders on Cambodia, Cochinchina and Annam all at once in the south.

a. FROM THE POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northeast, the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï (Tonkin, province of Van-Bu);

●648 2. In the north, Yun-Nan (prefecture of S'sémao);

3. In the northwest, the Anglo-Burmese Shan State of Xieng-Tong as far as Nam-Huok, slightly upstream from Xieng-Sèn;

4. In the west:

a) The Siamese Shan and Youn States of Xieng-Haï and Muong-Nan;

b) Siam itself (province of Outaradit);

c) The provinces which are tributary to Siam but which were placed in the zone of French influence by the London declaration of January 15, 1896; they are: Lao-Pou-Ein, with its capital in Ban-Dua-Makeng; Lao-Kao, with its capital in Oubône; and the principality of Tiampa-Sac (Bassac);

d) Cambodia (province of Kompong-Thom);

5. In the south, the provinces of Kratié (Cambodia), Tayninh (Cochinchina) and Binh-Thuan (Annam);

6. In the east, Annam.

b. FROM THE PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

131 1. In the northern regions:

133 a) The watershed on the left side of the valley of the Nam-La, as far as the Mékong;

[41] b) The right bank of the Mékong, from its junction with the Nam-La to its junction with the Nam-Houk;

2. In the western regions:

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"The administration of public works of Cochinchina was particularly responsible for carrying out the work. The operation was directed by Messrs. Gubiand, the engineering director of public works, and Crouzat, the chief clerk of the department of civil engineering [conducteur principal des ponts et chaussées], and was fully successful despite the haste, the difficulties and the mishaps and tribulations which we had to undergo.

"On October 31, 1893, five months after the mission's arrival in Saigon, two ships, the Massie and the Ham-Luong, had passed the Khône waterfalls.

"The Ham-Luong was a sloop from Cochinchina which was sent at the last [68] moment and in all haste to replace the La Grandière numerically and provisorily, the latter being disabled below the falls as the result of grave damage to the engine."

After they had been floated in the upper reach the Massie and the Ham-Luong pushed on to Bassoc immediately, then to the junction with the Sé-Moun. The Massie finally reached Kemmarat on February 28, 1894, after successfully passing the 120 kilometers of rapids just below it. There the Massie had to wait for high water before it could pass the Keng-Sa, one of the most dangerous obstacles in this region. In the high water season of 1894 it was in the Vien-Tiane reach, where it showed the French flag over an extent of more than 500 kilometers. On September 5, 1894, the La Grandière went to Khône in its turn, on its way from one reach to another, and then in November caught up with the Massie which it soon passed. Finally in August 1895 Lieutenant Commander Simon took the La Grandière through the series of rapids stretching over a distance of 350 kilometers between Vien-Tiane and Luang-Prabang, which he reached on September 1.

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"This brilliant success demonstrated France's power to the friendly and hostile populations of the banks of the Mékong. Through the more frequent sight of our officers, our weapons and our cruising steamships, which ammounted to ambulatory offices, it strengthened the work accomplished by our diplomats on the left bank, which belonged to us henceforth" (1).

[113]

(1) Lanier, L'Asie, 1898. Selected readings in geography.

We rejoice at being able to render deserved homage here to the abilities of Commander Simon who, in the midst of the greatest

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

149: Reinach--192 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium smokers.

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

648 439 175 "However, since it did not appear advisable to sanction the abandonment of the commercial agencies by an official act, which might have been regarded by the Laotian people and by the Court of Bangkok as a modification of the policy followed in the Mekong valley by the French Government," the positions were not discontinued, but only the officials who had held them.

It is thus that today the ten commercial agencies are directed by the administrators of neighboring provinces or by chief clerks or chief guards who perform the functions of commercial agents.

231 175 Temporary organization. Government commissionerships. Missions. As soon as the terms of the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, became known, various missions originating in Annam and Cochinchina were sent to Laos to reconnoiter, and set up a temporary organization for the territories on the left bank of the Mekong to which Siam had abandoned its claims.

In Upper Laos our agents, who were already established on the right bank at Luang-Prabang, took possession of the territory bearing this name. Then in the course of the first half of 1894, when the government commissioner M. Vacle had arrived, they settled in the former Annamite phus of Tran-Bienh and Tran-Ninh and in the territory of [Map, unpaged, inserted here] [273] Vien-Tiane. Somewhat later the assistant commissioner of the French Republic in Laos (1) and

(1) The general commissioner of the French Republic in Laos, M. Pavie, was the chief of two frontier delimitation missions which operated in the basin of the Red River, the Black River and the Mekong. His assistant commissioner was M. Lefèvre-Pontalis.

one of our former commercial agents in Luang-Prabang went out to reconnoiter and organize the territories of Xieng-Khong (left bank), Ponkha and Muong-Sing (2).

(2) A newly appointed government commissioner went out to take possession of the territory of the two Muong-Hou and settled at Muong-Ha-Hine to await the impending delimitation of the territory.

In middle Laos, two administrative agents delegated by the

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289 The amount of paper produced is hardly significant, and is limited to local needs.

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311 TEA. Tea is the most important crop of the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na and the Burmo-Shan States on both banks of the Mekong. The regions of production are included between 21° 30' and 22° 30' N. latitude and between 97° 30' and 99° 40' E. longitude.

175 The greater part of these regions, that is to say those situated on
648 the left bank of the Mekong, belonged to us by the terms of the 1887 Franco-Chinese treaty of Tien-Tsin. But because of our slowness to occupy these territories England inherited the rights of Upper Burma and ceded them to China, and finally only the two Muong-Hou remained in our possession.

563 Unfortunately, the small tea-growing region left to us is not only the least productive, but also the one in which tea-growing has degenerated and is no longer practiced except by the Khas.

[377] Yet the climate of the Muong-Hou is similar to that of Man-La, which is located thirty kilometers to the west and whose tea has the same reputation as those of I-Hou, I-Bang, Muong-Hing, Muong-Pang and Muong-Yang, all of which are known as "S'semao and Pou-Eurl Teas." Furthermore, the altitude and configuration of the soil, the nature of the terrain and the varieties of tea plants are all similar in our territory of Muong-Hou and in that of Man-La. But as a consequence of various circumstances and especially of a long interruption in cultivation between 1884 and 1893, most of the tea plants have not been pruned. They have reached a height of more than six meters and the tea which they produce is almost valueless (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVI.

The average production of the whole tea-growing region has been estimated at from 600 to 660 tons. This tea is exported to China, to Burma, to Laos, to Tonkin and to Siam. In 1891 and 1892 France imported a trial shipment of 6,000 kilograms, but the transaction was not repeated because of a rise in transport costs and customs duties which did not leave a large enough profit for the importer.

435 In the regions of production prices vary, depending on quality, between 75 and 150 francs per hundred kilograms.

The teas which come from this region meet with little approval in Europe, because they lack the various aromas which the Chinese

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking.

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine.

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread.

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others.

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.

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traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion. The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

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They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

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The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race.

Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

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He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More industrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements himself (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

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The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders composed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo